International Federation for East Timor

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H. E. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, N. Y. 10017

7 December 1992

Excellency:

The International Federation for East Timor, representing non-governmental organizations in Europe, North America, Australia and Japan, seeking a comprehensive resolution of the East Timor issue in keeping with the United Nations Charter and the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the issue, is deeply concerned at recent events in East Timor.

As you are aware, the Chairman of the National Council of Maubere (East Timor) Resistance (CNRM), Xanana Gusmao, was arrested by Indonesian troops on 20 November and has been held incommunicado, reportedly in Bali. Chairman Gusmao's arrest, the refusal of the Indonesian authorities to allow the International Red Cross to see him since his arrest two weeks ago, and the reports of numerous arrests of members of Chairman Gusmao's family and persons close to him are sufficiently disturbing in themselves, but they also augur ill for the fate of the discussions to be held under your auspices between representatives of Portugal and Indonesia on 17 December.

It is particularly disturbing that the Indonesian authorities released a videotape on 1 December purported to be of the incarcerated CNRM Chairman acknowledging Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. It is frightening to contemplate what measures Xanana's captors employed to produce this crude spectacle and equally disturbing to surmise what lies in store for Xanana as long as he remains in Indonesian hands. Furthermore, we fear that the Indonesian authorities' treatment of Chairman Gusmao may be aimed at creating confusion with regard to the agenda for a comprehensive settlement of the East Timor issue, an agenda which we believe must satisfy the legitimate demands of the people of East Timor to choose their own destiny, free from coercion by the forces that have occupied their territory for 17 years.

The International Federation for East Timor urges your Excellency to take every measure in your power to secure the immediate release of Xanana Gusmao. We believe that it is a matter of urgency for the United Nations to take action to end the terrorism to which the people of East Timor and their leader have been subjected.

Your Excellency's immediate response is crucial if we are to see any hope for a road out of the East Timor quagmire through

peaceful negotiations.

Respectfully yours,

Kan Akatani

Kan Akatani, Representative
for Ohtori Kurino, President
International Federation for East Timor

Members of the International Federation for East Timor are:

Free East Timor Japan Coalition consisting of nine Japanese NGOs concerned with East Timor and the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace. (Japan)

CDPM (Portugal)

A Paz é Possível em Timor Leste (Portugal)

Paz e Justiça Para Timor Leste (Portugal)

MCP (Portugal)

Tapol (United Kingdom)

Komitee Indonesië (The Netherlands)

Agir Pour Timor (France)

ASTO (France)

Gesellschaft fuer Bedrohte Voelker (Germany)

Östtimorkommiten (Sweden)

IEPALA & Comite de slidariedad con el pueblo de Timor-Este (Spain)

Servizio Civile Internazionale (Italy)

Hobart East Timor Committee (Australia)